GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1815
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Internet Speed and Cost
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Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the internet speed in the country is generally very low and the cost of Internet service is very high;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government has taken note of the fact that many of the telecom service providers in the country fail to adhere to minimum speed for Internet data;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the complaints received in this regard; and

(e) the action taken by the Government to expand network at prescribed speed and provide Internet facilities/data plan at affordable rate to people?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE (IC) OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS &
MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
(SHRI MANOJ SINHA)

(a) & (b) India has a global rank of 114 in terms of average connection speed as per Akamai's Report on 'The State of the internet' for Q1, 2016.

Further, as per the existing tariff framework prescribed by TRAI, tariff for internet service is under forbearance and the service providers have the flexibility to decide the tariff for different service areas of their operation. Tariffs are offered by service providers taking into account several factors including input costs, level of competition and other commercial considerations. Hike and reduction of different tariff components by telecom service providers are a regular feature and these changes vary for different plans/special tariff vouchers and service areas.

The cost of internet service for the end user depends on several factors like the type of service (narrowband/broadband), platform of services (wireline and wireless) and grades of technology (2G/3G/4G). The tariffs offered for internet services also vary based on the subscription mode (postpaid or prepaid), the service area, tariff plans chosen, time of usage (peak/off peak) etc.

Further, subscribers have options to avail lower tariffs through the use of Special Tariff Vouchers (STVs), Combo Vouchers (CVs) offered by service providers. Such vouchers provide discounted tariffs and/or certain quantity of free usage in lieu of an upfront pack charges and these vouchers have to be used within stipulated period which may vary from one day to ninety days.

(c) & (d) The Quality of Service for Broadband Service Regulations, 2006 issued by TRAI has prescribed the parameter 'Broadband Connection Speed (download)', to assess the performance of service providers on provision of download speed to users in accordance with the subscribed speed. The benchmark for this parameter is that the Subscribed Broadband Connection Speed from Internet Service Provider (ISP) Node to User to be met should be >80% of subscribed speed. As per the performance monitoring report for the quarter ending March 2016 issued by TRAI all the service providers are meeting the benchmark for this parameter.

For wireless data services, TRAI has prescribed the Quality of Service Standards through "The Standards of Quality of Service for Wireless Data Services Regulations, 2012" on 4thDecember 2012. These regulations do not prescribe any minimum speed to be given by cellular mobile Telephone Service Providers. However, the regulations mandate the service providers to specify the minimum download speed in all their tariff offers and that such minimum download speed should be met for not less than 80% of the usage time.

The service providers had been representing to TRAI about the difficulty in offering a minimum download speed to consumers. TRAI held several meetings with the service providers in this regard and decided to develop a mobile app named "TRAI My Speed". This application allows customers to measure their data speed experience and sends the results to TRAI. The application captures and sends coverage, data speed and other network information along with device and location of the tests. The app does not send any personal user information. All results are reported anonymously. This app is available for both Android and iOS platforms. The app could be downloaded from the mobile seva App store in the Google App store.

The Service Provider-wise details of complaints against Poor speed of Broadband/Internet received in TRAI during the last three years and the current year is at Annexure-I.

(e) National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) project, renamed as BharatNet, is planned to establish a network infrastructure by connecting all Gram Panchayats (approx. 2.5 lakh) in the country through Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) by using an optimal mix of underground fibre, fibre over power lines, radio and satellite media, for providing broadband connectivity by all categories of service providers on non-discriminatory basis. With the implementation of BharatNet project, which is one of the pillars of Digital India, non-discriminatory access to all categories of service providers including internet service providers will be available at Gram Panchayats with no investment to lay the optical fibre infrastructure. It is expected that it will promote internet and broadband usage in rural and remote areas at affordable rates. As on 16.07.2016, Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) has been laid to 54,635 Gram Panchayats (GPs) with a total length of 1,26,853 km. Out of these, 7342 GPs have been provided with broadband connectivity.

Annexure-I

Service Provider-wise number of complaints against Poor Speed of Broadband/ Internet received in TRAI during the last three years and current year

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S# Service Provider 2013 2014 2015 2016(1.1.2016 to 30.06.2016)
1 Aircel* 1 20 16 3
2 BSNL 15 53 84 33
3 Bharti Airtel* 10 23 86 111
4 HFCL/ Quadrant 0 0 2 0
5 Idea* 1 2 21 17
6 MTNL 11 10 42 7
7 Reliance* 8 46 163 35
8 Sistema Shyam Teleservices Ltd. (MTS) 2 118 194 76
9 Tata* 7 14 90 18
10 Videocon 0 0 1 0
11 Vodafone 2 53 69 26

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* Includes group companies

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